

## Revelation 2:1-7

## THE CHURCH OF EPHEBUS

## Part 2

## A WICKED CITY

The city in which the church of Ephesus was located was famous for many things. It is estimated that in New Testament times the city boasted of a population from between 250,000 and 500,000 people. The governor of Rome resided there, but there was no Roman garrison in Ephesus. It had a city theater that could seat around 25,000 people. It was a self-governing city – in that day it would be referred to as a free city. The city hosted many athletic events – it was big on entertainment.

Ephesus was the most important city in Asia Minor. But it was a city given to wickedness. According to William Barclay, “Heraclitus, one of the most famous of the ancient philosophers, was known as “the weeping philosopher.” His explanation of his tears was “that no one could live in Ephesus without weeping at its immorality.”

Ephesus was well known for its pagan superstition. You could buy in Ephesus amulets and charms, which were supposed to be remedies for all kinds of evils that befall people.

But Ephesus was known most of all by its goddess Diana (Artemis). Ephesus was the centre of worship of Diana. The temple of Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Its size was tremendous. It was sanctuary for criminals – if they could get there they were guaranteed safety. The temple grounds were filled with prostitutes, priests, dancers, and criminals. Furthermore, the sale of Diana idols, and items associated with the goddess Diana, provided an important source of income for the merchants and the city.

The worship of Diana was extremely vile. The idol itself was grotesque, a many breasted looking thing, which was believed to have fallen from heaven. And it was against this background that the church was heralding the message of Christ.

## THE WRITER

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; (2:1).

The message was given “Unto the angel [pastor, messenger] of the church of Ephesus,” and the messenger was to give the message unto the church. This is how God mediates His sovereign rule in the church through its human leaders.

Although, the writer is not named, we know “he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” describes the same person in chapter 1 and verses 13 and 16 – the glorified Christ. Through the apostle John, Christ writes unto the churches.

By: Jerry W. Arnold

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